

**JOHNSON
LOWE** GALLERY

SANFORD BIGGERS
MARK BRADFORD
LAYO BRIGHT
DARNSTUDIO
DANIELLE DEADWYLER
THORNTON DIAL
WILLIAM DOWNS
LEONARDO DREW
RICO GATSON
SHANEQUA GAY
TODD GRAY
TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK
LYLE ASHTON HARRIS
ASHANTE KINDLE
MICH MEKO
SHERVONE NECKLES
MASELA NKOLO
NAVIN NORLING
YANIQUE NORMAN
MASUD OLUFANI
YAW OWUSU
EBONY G. PATTERSON
ATO RIBEIRO
DEVAN SHIMOYAMA
RENEE STOUT
FELANDUS THAMES
SHOSHANNA WEINBERGER
COSMO WHYTE
BRENNNA YOUNGBLOOD

**THE
ALCHEMISTS**

MARCH 3 – APRIL 29



Todd Gray
Atlantic (Keisha's Redemption Song), 2022
Four archival pigment prints in artist's frames, UV
laminated
72 5/8 x 49 1/8 x 5 in
Courtesy of Todd Gray and David Lewis Gallery,
New York

Front Cover:
Ashante Kindle
Running Magic Right Through Ya, 2022
Hair bows, beads and barrettes, glass stones, and acrylic
on canvas
46 in diameter
Courtesy of Ashante Kindle and Johnson Lowe Gallery

The Alchemists (March 3 to April 29)

Co-Curated by Donovan Johnson and Seph
Rodney

*"This is the only real concern of the artist, to recreate
out of the disorder of life that order which is art."*

— James Baldwin

How is blackness — as a set of ideas, as ways of
being, as inherited legacies — transformed in an
artist's practice today? This question is the heart of
our thinking around this exhibition because it is an
urgent one; at a time when the commodification
and dilution of blackness into mainstream culture is
escalating.

Leaning on lessons gleaned from cinema,
literature, music, and performance, this show
peruses the influence of ideologies concerning
what it means to be Black, looking through the
lens of artistic practice to gaze perceptively on
material culture, resistance strategies, rituals
of commemoration, forms of play, speculative
fantasies, and all else that lives in the house of
blackness.

Today, Black culture is increasingly associated with
taste-making and trendsetting, cultivating the
notion of "Black Cool" and thus reformulating what
has been an undervalued and ignored history, set
of traditions, and collective identity. As it stands,
there is almost no creative field where Black
source material — and by extension, the ideas and
experiences that undergird this material — have
not found their way to influencing that field.
Blackness impacts global popular culture.

Yet, in our exuberant and sometimes uncritical
participation in these widespread, attenuated forms
of blackness, we risk a diminished comprehension
of all that blackness can be, and often is. "If
blackness is separated from this aesthetic of
cool that comes out of our culture... we lose the
understanding of how much we are actually giving
to this world," wrote Rebecca Walker in *Black Cool:
One Thousand Streams of Blackness*, arguing that
our intricately tangled heritage, is being simplified
(and perhaps even romanticized) into reductive
accounts.

How does an artist transform matter and transcend
the ordinary? *The Alchemists* offers artists who
construct unique forms rooted in the Black
experience and ancestral legacy to demonstrate
that this magic can indeed be done. Featuring
works across a wide range of mediums, including
painting, drawing, video, collage, assemblage, and
installation, this exhibition aims to function as a
critical platform for the manifestation of Black folks
thinking their way through blackness, informally
documenting Black material and ideological
culture.

Johnson Lowe Gallery has long been interested
in the influence of source materials and the
creative process of constructing, reimagining,
appropriating, and rendering such materials, both
natural and artificial, into unanticipated forms.
In physics, the term *transmutation* refers to the
conversion of one element into another. Though
transmutation can also refer to radioactive decay,
ancient Alchemists continuously aimed to create
precious metals, or some ideal of a universal
elixir, in their quests for wealth, longevity, and
immortality. But they never had the source material
of blackness. We do.



Trenton Doyle Hancock
Split Per Tonality, 2016
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
72 x 108 in
Courtesy Trenton Doyle Hancock and James Cohan Gallery, New York



Lyle Ashton Harris
Untitled (Mother), 1998
Cibachrome (Edition 3 of 6 + 2 APs)
49 x 38 7/8 x 2 in
Courtesy of Lyle Ashton Harris and Salon 94, New York

THE ALCHEMISTS

Sanford Biggers
Mark Bradford
Layo Bright
DARNstudio
Danielle Deadwyler
Thornton Dial
William Downs
Leonardo Drew
Rico Gatson
Shanequa Gay
Todd Gray
Trenton Doyle Hancock
Lyle Ashton Harris
Ashante Kindle
Michi Meko
Shervone Neckles
Masela Nkolo
Navin Norling
Yanique Norman
Masud Olufani
Yaw Owusu
Ebony G. Patterson
Ato Ribeiro
Devan Shimoyama
Renee Stout
Felandus Thames
Shoshanna Weinberger
Cosmo Whyte
Brenna Youngblood



Shanequa Gay
get that doe..., 2015
Flashe and acrylic on wood panel
72 x 49 in
Courtesy of Shanequa Gay

**JOHNSON
LOWE** GALLERY

764 Miami Circle, Suite 210
Atlanta, Ga 30324
johnsonlowe.com